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5 June 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel Policy, Planning, and Management

FROM :   
Chief, Policy Staff/OPPPM/P&E

SUBJECT : Cost of Personnel Evaluation Boards and Panels

1. The cost of personnel evaluation is a subject frequently addressed during discussions of various personnel management issues. The subject revolves around the associated costs (time and salary dollars) of evaluating all employees by evaluation boards and panels. Frequently the solution offered is to increase the base of the evaluation boards or panels by either expanding the number of persons being evaluated or increasing the categories of persons being evaluated. For various recorded reasons, neither of these alternatives offer a viable solution.

2. From a historical review, it appears that the Agency consciously chose to follow the path of evaluating employees by evaluation boards and panels. Prior to 1978, Career Service and Sub-group panels were required to annually evaluate all professional employees. In 1978, a policy decision was reached to require all Career Services to use the panel system to determine promotion eligibility for all employees regardless of category. In approving the Agency Personnel Evaluation System in February of 1980, the DDCI confirmed that "all CIA employees below SIS-4 will be evaluated for career development, promotion and value to service by a personnel board or panel system." In addition, the movement toward more consistency in approach to personnel management (but with flexibility of application by line management), as evidenced by the uniform precepts paper, may add to the time involvement on the part of evaluation boards and panels. These include: review the personnel file of each employee; evaluate at least annually; concentrate the file review on the last five years of service; etc.

3. Consistency and uniformity of evaluation, although reassuring, result in a costly personnel management system by requiring many employee years devoted to panel operations. Some alternative, such as rigid time-in-grade standards, would marginally reduce panel evaluation time for the promotion exercise only. The evaluation for value would need to be continued.

4. There is an alternative yet to be fully explored but one that would require a change in Agency expressed philosophy. This alternative would be based on the philosophy that the value of an employee is only to the immediate work unit in the early and learning years of Agency employment. Value would

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then become more universal when certain levels of experience, performance and time have been attained; that is, when the individual has attained the independent full performance level. The universal or Agency-wide value would begin at the supervisory or substantive specialist level. This independent full performance level would vary, and maybe widely, within the Agency but could be determined by position survey and the establishment of job standards in consultation with component managers for those positions up to the independent full performance level. Development, assignment, promotion, and certification would be against these standards. Decisions affecting employees (such as promotion, training, reassignment) until they reach this independent full performance level, would be by supervisory certification thereby negating the need for an evaluation panel review. Thus, the cost would be reduced. Evaluation board and panel review would begin once the employee reaches the independent full performance level, the break point to supervisory and substantive specialist positions. A gross estimate means the removal of [ ] employees from the evaluation review process which could represent almost a 30 percent reduction in evaluation board and panel workload.

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5. Once the plate of the Policy Staff starts emptying, I would like to study this alternative in depth. However, as it is predicated on a change in Agency evaluation philosophy, I feel the need for your approval prior to pursuing this concept further.

Approved ( )

Disapproved ( )

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Director of Personnel Policy,  
Planning, and Management

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